Marches Archaeology

Bowers Court Water Street Dursley Gloucestershire

Report on an archaeological watching brief

December 2004

Marches Archaeology Series 363

Archaeological Consultants and Contractors

This report is produced by

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Bowers Court Water Street Dursley Gloucestershire

NGR: ST 757 908

Report on an archaeological watching brief

Report by

Jo Wainwright

Contents

List of illustrations

List of plates

Summary

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Archaeological and historical background
- 3 Scope and aims of the project
- 4 Methodology
- 5 The watching brief
- 6 The pottery by Stephanie Ratkái
- 7 Discussion
- 8 References
- 9 Acknowledgements
- 10 The archive

Appendix 1: Pottery data

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Marches Archaeology Series 363

List of illustrations

Fig. 1	Location of the site
Fig. 2	Plan of the areas excavated showing deposits and features
Fig. 3	Detail from Tithe Plan, about 1845
Fig. 4	Detail from 1883 First Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey Plan

List of plates

Plate 1 Area 2: Looking south showing walls [24], [25] and [27]

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Report on an archaeological watching brief

Summary

A watching brief on groundworks at Bowers Court, Water Street, Dursley, Gloucestershire revealed archaeological remains dating from the early postmedieval period. The walls of a building dating from before the later part of the 17^{th} century were uncovered. This building was altered and extended in probably the 18^{th} century and in the late 19^{th} century was demolished. Several features relating to the present building's earlier function as a slaughterhouse were also recorded.

1 Introduction

Planning consent had been granted by the local planning authority for permission to extend offices and erect a first floor extension to a store/workshop at Bowers Court, Water Street, Dursley (ref: S99/1644). The site is located at NGR: ST 757 908 (Fig. 1). A condition was attached to the planning consent requiring that in order that the archaeological resource was adequately protected an archaeological programme of works should be carried out during ground works associated with the proposed development.

The Local Planning Authority's Archaeology Advisor produced a 'Brief for archaeological recording.' Mr B Crowe of Stonehealth Limited commissioned Marches Archaeology to provide the archaeological services detailed in the Brief.

The site consists of an office to the south and a store in the north with a yard in between (Fig. 2). A channelled stream forms the eastern boundary with Water Street with a brick wall and stone wall separating the site from the stream. To the south the office faces a building known as Broadwell and further brick and stone walls form the western and northern boundaries. The site is c. 67 metres O.D.

2 Archaeological and historical background

Dursley

Although Roman pottery and the remains of a building of the period have been recorded in the area (RCHM, 1976) no evidence of occupation of the site of the town is recorded until the Domesday Book. At that time Dursley formed part of the holding of the Berkeley family. During the early part of the 12th century a feud developed between the Berkeley family and the Fitz Hardings, who eventually took over the title of the Lords Berkeley. In the mid 12th

century Roger de Berkeley made a burgage grant to Dursley and the castle possibly existed before that as Henry of Anjou is reputed to have stayed there in 1149, though it is generally held that the castle was built in 1153 (Leech, 1981). This may have been a replacement for an early wooden structure as a castle is mentioned as being given as part of a marriage settlement in that year, when the Berkeleys and Fitz Hardings eventually patched up their quarrel by means of a pair of weddings.

In 1221 a servant of Henry de Berkeley of Dursley was imprisoned in Berkeley Castle for the murder of a woman. The servant managed to escape and fled to Dursley church. Because of this escape from his prison, Lord Thomas Berkeley was amerced (Smyth, 1883).

A Thursday market was held in Dursley from at least 1471 as a grant was awarded to the Marquess of Berkeley. This grant was confirmed by Henry VIII. and the town also had two annual fairs on the feast of St. Martin (25th April) and that of St. Clement (23rd November). The market house was built in 1738 and replaced an earlier market cross (GSMR 1010).

Dursley became increasingly important in the cloth trade and was one of five villages in the Stroud area exempted from the general ban on cloth production outside towns. It was famed for its blue cloth for whose manufacture the locally outcropping Fullers earth was essential.

With the decline of the cloth trade Dursley also declined to become the small market town it is today.

An article in the London Chronicle in August 1778 recorded the uncovering of the castle walls, though the exact position has been lost, a field still referred to as Castle Field marks the general position.

An archaeological watching brief 200m north-west of the site at the Education Centre revealed pottery that was probably medieval in date and a watching brief at Listers Social Club 100m north-west of the site on Long street also revealed medieval pottery (GSMR 1010). To the west of the site, in the Market Place, a watching brief revealed medieval soils that could represent surfaces and a wall which could have formed part of a timber framed building fronting onto Long Street (Wainwright, 1999).

The Site

The site lies within the historic urban core of medieval Dursley. In the 13th century rents in the manor of Dursley were granted to the nuns of the Priory of St Mary's Clerkenwell by Maurice de Gaunt and the prioress of Dursley is mentioned in a document of 1417 (GSMR 2824). Broadwell, the building slightly to the south of the site, was formerly known as Broadwell Tavern. A deed of 1610 refers to the building as "St Mary's House" and it is reputed to be part of the nunnery. A 15th to 16th century date has been suggested for the construction of this building (Verey & Brooks, 1999). Local inhabitants before 1888 could remember a similar house situated to the north (GSMR 2824). Lett suggests that the houses in Bowers Court are built on part of the site of the nunnery (Lett, 1888/89). The well to the north of the site is believed to have been built especially for the occupants of St Mary's House and was reputed to be within the precincts of the nunnery (Walters, 1928).

The Tithe Plan of about 1845 shows a building where the present building stands (number 318) though this building is larger (Fig. 3). Presumably this was the predecessor to the

present building and it could be the house that the local inhabitants remembered before 1888. There is also a building shown at the north end of the site which could be the one standing now. The boundaries of the site appear to have not changed since the Tithe Plan was drawn. Presumably the course of the stream has always delineated the eastern boundary of the site. Cottages to the west of the site are not shown on the Tithe plan but appear on the First Edition 1883 Ordnance Survey Plan (Fig. 4). The building shown at the south of the site on the 1883 Plan is presumably the one shown on the Tithe Plan. The present office block must have replaced this building sometime after 1883. The owner of the site believes it was built in the late 19th century. The building at the north of the site is shown as slightly larger and a different shape on the later 1883 Plan, perhaps this building was extended between c.1840 and 1883.

The owner of the site has deeds and papers dating from 1721 relating to the site though these were not examined by the author. However, a limited amount of study of these documents has taken place. The present office block was originally a slaughterhouse and apparently a brewhouse existed on the site before this (pers comm, Jamie Fairchild). It is hoped that further examination of the documents relating to Bowers Court will take place in the future.

3 Scope and aims of the project

The scope of the project is defined in the Brief as archaeological supervision and monitoring of all groundworks required for the development.

The aims of an archaeological watching brief are defined by the Institute of Field Archaeologists as:

'to allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works'

and:

'to provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support a treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard.

4 Methodology

Fieldwork

Observations of all ground breaking activity in association with the proposed development were made, and the appropriate recording undertaken. The whole of Area 1 was taken down 250mm from the original ground level and a foundation trench around the edge of the area was excavated to a depth of 450mm. The foundation trench in the south of Area 1 was taken down a further 450mm and a small sondage in the west of this footing was excavated to a maximum depth of 2 metres below the original ground level. Area 2 was excavated to a depth of 350mm below the original ground level and a foundation trench around the edge of the area was excavated to a maximum depth of 350mm below the original ground level and a foundation trench around the edge of the area was excavated to a maximum depth of 600mm. Area 3 was excavated to a

maximum depth of 1.85 metres in the east and to a depth of 450mm in the west for the insertion of an oil separation tank. An archaeologist was on site for a total of 3 days during 2000, 2001 and 2003.

The recording system included written, drawn and photographic data. The primary written record was by means of site notes, accompanied by sketches. Context numbers were allocated and context record sheets completed as appropriate. Plans, sections and other appropriate drawings of significant data were made. The photographic record was made using black and white negative and colour transparency film. Samples were taken of deposits considered to have environmental, technological or scientific dating potential.

Office work

On completion of fieldwork a site archive was prepared. The written, drawn and photographic data was catalogued and cross-referenced and a summary produced. The artefactual data was processed, catalogued and cross-referenced and a summary produced. After an initial assessment unstratified non-diagnostic artefacts were discarded. The two environmental samples were not processed.

5 The watching brief

Area 1 (Fig. 2)

The earliest layer excavated in Area 1 was seen at 1.4 metres below the present ground surface in a sondage in the south western part of the area. This was a waterlogged firm dark brown/black silt containing humic material and was a minimum 800mm thick [14]. Cutting this was an east to west aligned culvert made from thin local limestone blocks along the sides and capped with similar sized stones [15]. Each stone was about 240mm long, 200mm wide and 30mm thick. The whole structure was about 240mm high and 200mm wide and was partially within the southern section of the trench so the base of the structure was not visible. Above this was another waterlogged deposit [9], which was a dark brown/black clay silt with occasional sand, humic material, charcoal, limestone fragments and a lens of yellow clay. This layer was 750mm thick. Overlying this was a mid grey sandy silt layer with frequent limestone, occasional brick, charcoal and mortar [2].

In the south eastern part of Area 1 the earliest layer excavated was a dark brown waterlogged clayey silt with occasional sand, humic material and limestone fragments [12]. This deposit is probably contemporary with [9] to the west. Overlying [12] was 300 mm thick light brown sandy silt with frequent mortar, limestone and brick fragments [8] which is possibly contemporary with [2].

Cutting both [8] and [2] was a north east to south west aligned culvert [5]. This was constructed of local limestone and brick. The whole structure was about 1.90 m wide though the actual culvert chamber was only 220mm wide and 220mm deep. The stones were bonded with a yellowish silty clay. Within the chamber was a mid grey black silt with occasional mortar, brick fragments and sand [13]. The top of the culvert was visible in the shallower foundation trench to the north east. Bonded to part of the western edge of the culvert, though later in date, was a 450mm wide limestone foundation running almost east to west [10] and [11]. This footing was only 1.4m long and 150mm deep though it had been

probably robbed out in the west though no robbing cut was apparent. The foundation was bonded with a yellowish clay.

Cutting both [5] and [10] was a limestone and brick pier base which was 950mm wide and 400mm thick [6] and [7]. To the west of this pier base was another pier base [3] and [4] which was contemporary with [6]. Overlying the pier bases was a mixed demolition or make up layer [1] which the modern surfaces were laid on. This was maximum 400mm in the west.

Area 2 (Fig. 2 and Plate 1)

The earliest features excavated in Area 2 were a series of walls [24], [25], [30], [31] and [32] constructed of a rough hewn local limestone core with courses of larger roughly squared blocks on the outside, each wall was bonded with a beige clay. These walls probably represent a building with a central entranceway and passage on the north side and two small rooms either side of the passage. Wall [24] was 560mm wide and was a minimum of four courses deep with a total minimum height of 380mm and was faced on the west side. It was aligned north to south and was truncated in the south by the construction of the standing building.

Parallel to [24] was wall [25] which was 590mm wide, a minimum 300mm high and was faced on the east. In the south the standing building was built over the top of [25]. To the east of wall [25] was wall [31] which was faced on the west and had been partially robbed out by modern features and the construction of the standing building to the south. This wall was 600mm wide, a minimum 300mm high and was faced on the west.

The east to west return of [31] was allocated the context number [30]. This was 500mm wide, was faced on the north and was a minimum 270mm high. Running north to south and adjoining [30] was wall [32]. This wall was badly truncated by a modern manhole and drain and the full width of this feature was not seen as it continued into the east section.

Seen in the deeper footing trench in the north and butting up to [24] and [30] was a softish dark grey black clayey silt with occasional tile, charcoal, mortar, oyster shell, humic material and limestone fragments [35]. This was seen at the limit of excavation and because of the waterlogged conditions it was difficult to tell whether this layer butted up to certain features or was cut by them. Because walls [24] and [30] showed no change in their construction and the threshold of the entranceway was not reached it is believed that [35] is later than these walls. It is also possible that other features, [27] and [29] did not cut this deposit but were also abutted by it.

Butting up to wall [24], to the east, was a mixed layer of beige mortar with frequent limestone fragments, and burnt bricks [36]. This layer was not excavated. Sitting on this layer was a stone and brick hearth or fireplace [29] which was keyed into wall [27]. Wall [27] was made of local limestone in the main though the north west corner was of curved bricks and at the back of the hearth or fireplace bricks had been incorporated within [27]. It was bonded with a soft beige sandy mortar and was keyed into walls [24 and 25] though it was later in date.

To the east of wall [27] and the west of wall [30] was a brick wall [34] which had been built to block the gap of the entranceway between the two earlier walls. Three courses were

excavated which were bonded with a grey softish mortar. It was not keyed into [27] or [30] but butted up to them.

In the north of the trench two walls/foundations were excavated which butted up to the earlier limestone walls. Wall [28] butted up to [24], was 530mm wide and two courses were observed to a height of 260mm. Wall [33] butted up to [30] and was a minimum 100mm high.

Infilling between all the features was a mixed layer of mid grey sandy silt with frequent limestone, occasional brick, charcoal and mortar [2], which was seen in Area 1. Cutting [2] were a series of driven posts [16], [17], [18], [19], [20], [21], [22], [23] and 26]. Surrounding these posts was a levelling layer [1], which was also seen in Area 1.

Area 3 (Fig. 2)

A sequence of deposits that were observed in the south-west corner of Area 1 were observed here. The earliest layer was [14] which was overlain by [9]. Above this was deposit [2], which was cut by culvert [5]. The culvert in this trench had turned and was aligned north to south.

6 The Pottery by Stephanie Ratkái

The pottery was examined macroscopically and divided into fabric or ware groups. The three medieval sherds from [9] and [14] were examined under x 20 magnification. The pottery was quantified by sherd count and weight and minimum rim count. Details of vessel form, glaze and decoration were recorded.

One hundred and fourteen sherds (5161g) were recorded. With the exception of three medieval sherds the pottery was either post-medieval or modern.

The medieval pottery consisted of two unglazed sherds with a fine oolitic limestone temper, possibly Cirencester fabric 200, and one sherd in a coarser calcareous fabric with sparse-moderate limestone fragments, possibly Minety ware. The medieval pottery occurred residually in [9] and [14].

Over half the pottery was made up of coarsewares i.e. utilitarian vessels such as bowls, pancheons and jars. Coarseware forms occurred in four fabrics, all oxidised to an orange or weak red colour with olive, tan or reddish tan glazes. The fabrics comprised a very finely sandy micaceous ware (cwfm), a fine red ware with few inclusions, the most common of which were small pieces of limestone (cwfr), a fine sandy ware (cwfs) and a slightly coarser, well-sorted sandy ware (cws). The latter sandy wares contained occasional fragments of limestone. The presence of limestone in the fabrics suggests that they were of fairly local origin. The likely date range for these fabrics is 16th-18th centuries. The remaining post-medieval and modern pottery was made up of wares known regionally e.g. yellow ware or nationally e.g. creamware.

In Area 1, the earliest layer [14] contained two residual medieval sherds, two blackware cup sherds and an olive glazed mug or jug rim with traces of white slip decoration (fabric cwfs), a jug rim (fabric cwfm) and a flange rim platter with a 'wavy' pinched rim and internal olive

glaze. The date for [14] probably lies within the 17th century. The waterlogged deposit [9] which post-dated [14] contained two joining mottled ware mug base sherds suggesting a date in the later 17th-early/mid 18th centuries. A chamber pot (fabric cwfm), similar in form and decoration to vessels from Donyatt (Coleman-Smith and Pearson 1988 figs161-162) but with an olive glaze, suggests that a date in the first half of the 18th century is most likely for [9]. However, some residual material was present, since there was a sherd from a 16th century Cologne stoneware mug or drinking jug, decorated with applied acanthus and medallion busts (cf Hurst *et al* 1986 fig 102, 328). The medallion busts are wearing rather jaunty hats.

The earliest layer [12] in the south-eastern section of Area 1, contained a sherd from a creamware flange-rim dish giving a date of c1770-1780. The remaining sherds from this layer, a pie-crust rim slipware dish, a slip-coated ware ?jug rim and an indeterminate yellow ware sherd could date to the later 17th-early/mid 18th centuries.

Only two sherds were recovered from Area 2, from [35] a silty layer abutting walls [24] and [30]. Both sherds were North Devon gravel-tempered ware and are unlikely to be earlier than the later 17th century.

The pottery assemblage was too small to be able to draw any conclusions about function or status, although a crested ridge tile from [2] suggests that there was once a good quality building in the vicinity. Most of the activity was clearly post-medieval in date. Most of the pottery is likely to have been of fairly local manufacture, although there were clearly wider contacts, as evidenced by the North Devon gravel-tempered ware and the Cologne stoneware. The yellow ware and mottled ware may have been made in Bristol, a more likely source than the Staffordshire Potteries.

7 Discussion

Phase 1

The earliest phase of activity on the site was a series of walls [24], [25], [30], [31 and [32] seen in Area 2. These walls probably represent the northern part of a building with a central entranceway and passage on the north side and two small rooms either side of the passage. Layers [35] butts up to these walls and dates from the later 17th century so the building must have been constructed before then. It is possible that it was constructed in the early post-medieval period and could be the building shown on the 1845 Tithe Plan (Fig. 3). A brewhouse was supposed to have existed on the site and it is possible that this building was it.

Phase 2

The blocking of an entrance with wall [27] and the insertion of a fireplace [29] in the building was the next phase of activity. This took place in the late 17th century or later as [29] overlay deposit [35] which dates from the late 17th century. Layer [14], seen in Area 1 and 3, dates from the 17th century and is probably contemporary with deposit [35]. Culvert [15] was cutting [14] so must have been built during or after the 17th century and is possibly associated with the alterations to the building in the south.

Phase 3

In probably the 18th century the building seen in Area 2 was extended northwards by the addition of walls [28] and [30] and the blocking of the entranceway by wall [34]. Perhaps this is the extension shown on the 1883 Ordnance Survey Plan (Fig. 4).

Modern

A levelling layer [2], seen over the whole site, was probably the result of demolition of the building in Area 2 in the late 19th century. A Culvert [5] cutting [2] is probably associated with the standing building when it was a slaughterhouse. Wall [10] and posts [16-23] and [26] are also probably associated with the slaughterhouse.

8 References

Abbreviations

The Gloucestershire Sites and Monuments Record (GSMR)

Maps

1845 Tithe plan

1883 First Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey Plan

Unpublished references

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9 Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Brian Crowe and Jamie Fairchild of Stonehealth Ltd for their assistance and co-operation during the project.

10 The archive

The site code is BWD00A and BWD03A. The archive consists of:

- 36 context sheets
- 1 context index sheet
- 1 drawing index sheet
- 5 field drawings on 2 sheets
- 1 sheet of inked drawings
- 1 sheet showing matrix
- 8 finds sheets
- 1 sample index sheet
- 2 sample record sheets
- 6 photo record sheets
- 3 films of black and white photographic negatives
- 3 films of colour photographic transparencies
- 1 box of finds

The archive is currently held at the offices of Marches Archaeology awaiting transfer to the relevant repository.

Appendix 1: Pottery data

Table 1: Fabric types

ctxt	Fab	qty	wght	mv	form	comment
1	agatew	1	21			int glaze over 'joggled clay'
1	crw	3	28			
1	cwfm	1	17	1	bowl	int red-brown glaze, bead rim
1	cwfm	1	118	1	bowl	ext bands of white slip, int mid-brown glaze
1	cwfm	2	31			it red-brown glaze
1	cwfr	1	98			int tan glaze
1	CWS	1	82	1		int olive glaze
1	CWS	1	11		bowl	bodbase, int olive glaze
1	CWS	3	41			int glazes, olive, tan and greenish brown
1	indslpw	1	7		mug	
1	refbod	1	15	1	bowl	bead rim bowl, red-brown glaze
1	slpwtr	1	8	1	platter	pie-crust rim, I-o-d decoration
2	cbm	1	124			scar of crest, unglazed
2	crw	3	16		0	
2	cwfm	1	51		bowl	bodbase, mid brown glaze
2	cwfm	1	21		handle	unglazed, could be horiz handle from a bowl orskillet handle
2	cwfm	17	1454		jar?	massive, very thick-bodied, int tan glaze
2	cwfm	1	61	1	handled jar	int mid-brown glaze
2	cwfm	6	118		-	reddish tan glaze, mainly bowl sherds probably
2	cwfm	1	47		bowl	bodbase, int reddish tan glaze
2	cwfm	1	17		bowl	bodbase, int tan glaze
2	cwfs	1	88	1	bowl	int brown glaze, glaze partially across one break
2	cwfs	1	9	1	bowl	ie brown glaze, rilled exterior
2	CWS	1	62	1	bowl	abraded, int tan glaze
2	CWS	1	26		bowl	bodbase, int olive glaze
2	CWS	1	10		bowl	int tan glaze
2	CWS	3	21		bowl	3 vessels, int glaze, 1 tan, 2 brown
2	fig	1	54		figurine	Scottish man in kilt (!)
2	indslpw	2	52	1	bowl	mixing bowl, with 'spit' pattern
2	stwbr	7	370	1		probably all one vessel, a bottle/flagon
2	stwlb	2	64		flagon	
2	yw	1	68		bowl	bodbase, int and ext dribbly glaze, buff fabric ?Bristol?
5	cwfm	1	60		bowl?	int reddish tan glaze
8	cbm	3	488		roof tile	
8	cwfr	3	558	1		int red-brown glaze
8	cwfr	1	68		bowl	body-base sherd, int red-brown glaze
8	cwfr	1	52		bowl	base sherd, int red-brown glaze
8	cwfr	1	5		bowl	ba, int mid-brown glaze
8	cwfr	1	118		jar?	int tan glaze
8	cwfr	1	10			int tan glaze
8	plw	1	7	1	tea-bowl	painted brown and purplish brown dec (vine and grapes)
8	slipco	1	31	1	platter	pie crust rim, int dark-brown glaze
9	cistblw	4	14		cup	
9	cwfm	2	68	1		dark olive glaze, white slip dec, cf Donyatt figs 161-62, fine clean micaceous fabric

9	cwfr	1	5		hw	ie mid-brown glaze
9	CWS	3	52			fine well-sorted quartz v rare limestone int tan glaze
9	CWS		5			ext olive glaze
9	CWS		15	1	bowl	int olive glaze
9	CWS		14	1	bowl	int brown glaze
9	CWS		10	1	bowl?	ie brownish olive glaze
9	gstw	1	17		drjug	Cologne alternating, medallion busts and acanthus
9	mang	2	16		mug	sherds join, baseba, ext sooted base
9	med oolitic	1	82		pitcher	int abraded, trace of int glaze, fine oolitic temper, reduced, possibly fab 200 from Cirencester dated to 13th c
12	crw	1	3		dishfr	
12	slipco	1	10	1	jug?	ie brown glaze
12	slpwtr	1	39	1	platter	pie-crust rim, I-o-d decoration
12	yw	1	11			underglaze white slip, cws fabric
14	blw	2	3			
14	cwfm	1	10	1	jug	ext thin partial dark brown glaze
14	cwfs	1	66	1	platter	wavy rim, int olive glaze
14	cwfs	1	29		handle	partial tan glaze
14	cwfs	1	4	1	mug	int and ext olive glaze, trace of white slip dec
14	cwfs	1	4			int reddish tan glaze
14	CWS	1	10		bowl	ba int olive glaze
14	med oolitic	1	23			int abrasion/leaching
14	Minety?	1	14			hard, limestone tempered
35	ndgt	1	27		bowl	int olive glaze, ext olive splash, base sherd
35	ndgt	1	3		bowl?	int tan glaze

Table 2: Quantification of pottery by sherd count and spot dates

	agate ware	blackware	cbm	cistercian ware/blackware	creamware	cwfm	cwfr	cwfs	CWS	ceramic figurine	cologne stoneware	industrial slipware	mottled ware	Cirencester fabric 200?	Minety ware ?	north Devon gravel-tempered ware	pearlware	refined body ware	slip-coated ware	trailed slipware	brown salt-glazed stoneware	light-bodied stoneware	yellow ware	
Cont ext																C					ł			Total
1	1				3	4	1		5			1						1		1				17
2			1		3	28		2	6	1		2									7	2	1	53
5						1																		1
8			3				8										1		1					13
9				4		2	1		3		1		2	1										14
12					1														1	1			1	2
14		2				1		4	1					1	1									10
35																2								2
Total	1	2	4	4	7	36	10	6	15	1	1	3	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	2	7	2	2	114

Spot Dating

- 1 early 19th c
- 2 19th c
- 5 post-medieval
- 8 late 18th-early 19th c
- 9 first half of the 18th c
- 12 late 18th c
- 14 17th c
- 35 later 17th c